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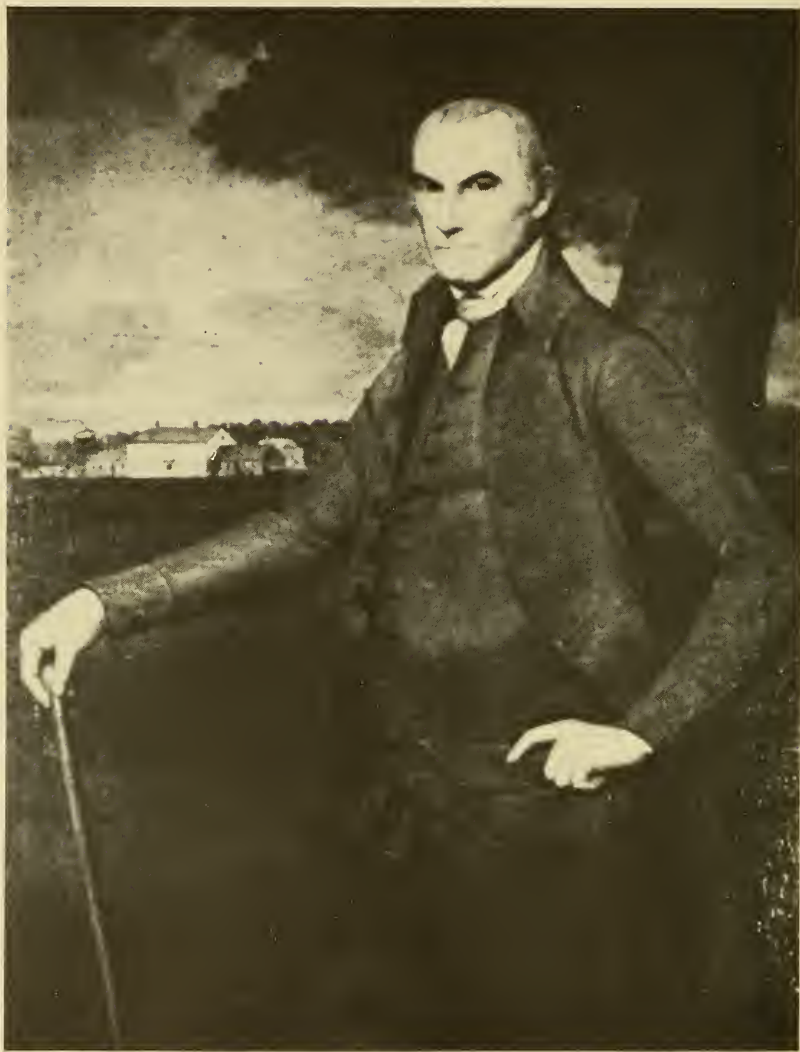
A Portrait of
WILLIAM FLOYD,
Long Islander

BY WILLIAM Q. MAXWELL

S. P. L. I. A.



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*William Floyd, from the portrait by Ralph Earl, at Mastic, L. I.
Owned by Mrs. John T. Nichols.*

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1956

Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities

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PREFACE

THE PORTRAIT of General William Floyd was painted by Ralph Earle (1751-1801). Today the visitor can see it at the Floyd house at Mastic. Floyd had nothing of the daring thinker in his mental composition. Set him beside Jefferson and Adams, and they seem to dwarf him. The stilted language of some of his eulogists make Floyd appear stiff and chilling; but his letters and receipts unlock the man with human needs. Floyd was not devoid of intellectual interest. As a naive realist he was eminently practical, and clearly took the world as he found it. Nothing has yet turned up which shows him intentionally shirking his responsibilities.

In writing *A Portrait of William Floyd, Long Islander*, for the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, I have been largely dependent on four persons. Mrs. John Treadwell Nichols placed the receipts and letters of William Floyd at my disposal. The letters were few, but the receipts were numerous. For many years they had lain undisturbed in the attic at Mastic. The descendants of William Floyd knew about them, but it was Mrs. Nichols who spent a year on these manuscripts, deciphering and putting them together in delightful account, *As Told by the Attic Letters to Cornelia Floyd Nichols*. Mrs. Nichols also sent me photostats of the papers in the possession of Mr. Andrew Fiske, and typescripts of items at the Easthampton Free Library and elsewhere. Useful and invaluable was "The Completed Sets of Signers of the Declaration of Independence," an article by Joseph E. Fields, M.D., published in the *Autograph Collectors Journal* for January 1951. Dr. Fields also put me in touch with many owners of sets of Signers. Special thanks are due Miss Dorothy Eaton of the Library of Congress for calling several items to my attention, and to Mr. Wayne Andrews of the New-York Historical Society for bringing me books and information.

I have used footnotes whenever quoting from certain manuscripts. For the sake of clarity and simplicity I have not cited the many receipts in the footnotes. Because William Floyd offers difficulties in composing a character sketch, I have kept his peculiarities of spelling and punctuation in the quotations from his letters.

I received photostats and typescripts from the following institutions: Easthampton Free Library, Suffolk County Historical Society, Pierpont Morgan Library, Long Island Historical Society, New York State Library, New York Historical Society, New York Public Library, New Jersey Historical Society, Connecticut State Library, Massachusetts Historical Society, Maine Historical Society, Chicago

Historical Society, Henry E. Huntington Library of San Marino, California, Library of Congress, National Archives, Detroit Public Library, Marietta College, Ohio, Amherst College, Haverford College Library, Harvard University Library, Yale University Library, University of Pennsylvania, Munson, Williams Proctor Institute of Utica, N. Y., St. Mary of the Lake Seminary of Illinois, St. John's Seminary of Camarillo, California, and the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

I have also received letters, typescripts, and photostats from Dr. Joseph E. Fields of Joliet, Illinois, Robert C. Norton of Cleveland, Ohio, Dr. J. M. Dearborn of New York City, Mr. Walter N. Eastburn of East Orange, N. J., Mr. Justin G. Turner of Hollywood, California, Mr. Andrew Fiske of Shelter Island, N. Y., Mr. Chester G. Osborne, curator at the Manor of St. George, Long Island, and Mrs. Rose Belk, librarian at "Colonial Williamsburg," Williamsburg, Virginia.

WILLIAM QUENTIN MAXWELL

New York City
June 6, 1956

PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM FLOYD, LONG ISLANDER

DRESSED IN A SUIT OF SOLEMN BROWN, William Floyd stands in his portrait, cane in hand, beneath a large shade tree. Possibly the painting is too conventional to catch his qualities.¹ It has no suggestion of the young bachelor who carried "1 Snuf box Gold bird & Sprig" in his waistcoat. Surely the likeness bears little resemblance to the jocund bridegroom of August, 1760; for clad in a tailored suit with "29 Coat and 12 Brest Buttens," he came to marry Miss Hannah Jones. Wearing less in 1773, Floyd presumably stood in brown linen drawers and silk garters, preparing to slip on a "Lappell'd Coat & Breeches." (The tailor used "Superfine Blue Cloth" which he set off with gilt buttons.) Possibly Floyd moved radiantly among the delegates of 1775, when he entered the Continental Congress in a suit of "Superfine Ingrain Cloth" studded with "Gold Star spangle Buttons."

The person in the portrait suggests an eighteenth century British gentleman, whose early training had made manners and courtesy his second nature. With honor the mainspring of action, the gentleman was quick to defend his good name from insult. He shunned any suggestion of the individualistic, but strove for uniformity of behavior and the appearance of ease. To study meant to be familiar with the classics but not to violate good taste by a display of great learning; for he was an amateur who took delight in his accomplishments.

Frank and independent, Floyd was noted for decorous deportment which, though it discouraged intimacy, never cost him popular favor. Floyd, however, fell short of the British gentlemanly ideal. The son of a wealthy freeholder, he should have had a sounder classical education. His concerns lay too much with business. The remains of his library show an interest in religious literature more common among the Americans than the English of this period. The *Sermons* of Isaac Watts found a place on Floyd's bookshelf beside the *Catechism*. Floyd purchased three volumes of the *American Preacher* (1792); to offset this collection of sermons he later bought Gay's *Fables* as well as the *Natural History of Beasts* and a book on treatises (1793).

In his student days Floyd probably studied from *The Young Mathematician's Guide*, London, 1731. On the flyleaf facing the inside cover is the following inscription: "Nathaniel Major, his book,

bought at Mr. Franklin's in Philadelphia, August the 19th, 1737. Price 12 Shillings sterling." Also on the same sheet another inscription:

Sume Libris Guielme Floyd
William Floyds Book 1750

Probably the young Floyd loved to write his name; for on the verso of the flyleaf he wrote it twice, the one dated 1748 and the other 1750. He also inscribed his name on page one of the text.²

The shelf at Mastic also held books on etiquette, such as *The Young Gentleman and Lady's Monitor* (1796). Floyd like other Americans of his station apparently prized the tradition of the gentleman. Few today have reason to read *Characteristics* by Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury; but its influence on thought and manners in the eighteenth century was general. Floyd not only bought the book but probably sought to mold himself according to Shaftesbury's precepts. Published in Boston, 1787, *The Constitutions of the Sixteen States* found a place on his bookshelf.³

He followed current events in the New York newspapers, subscribing to the *Gazette*, the *Mercury*, and the *News*. He very likely followed the trends of provincial politics from copies of the *Votes* and "a Set of Laws." After the Revolutionary War Floyd read the *Daily Advertiser*, the *Journal*, and the *Journal of Congress*. Many were the uses of newspapers. From Philadelphia Floyd wrote to William Dering:

Inclosed you have Some of the News papers, and altho they Do not Contain anything very Important yet they may assist to Shorten a Winter's Evening — — When you have read them youll give Mr. Huntington and Doctr Dickenson the reading of them, requesting that they may be returned to you, I could wish them all preserved for the sake of some political and other pieces which they contain.⁴

Americans like Floyd modified the British portrait of the gentleman. Floyd's remaining letters are free from classical embellishments. He erred against grammar and rhetoric, and frequently his writing became labored and obscure; but as a rule his style was direct and without sententiousness and moralizing. Since the running of his estate was Floyd's livelihood, he would scarcely disparage trade and commerce as much as his contemporary overseas. Floyd could only succeed through shrewdness and the mastering of practical details. His values and attitudes very likely differed from those of his equals among the English; yet these differences did not keep Floyd and his countrymen from prizing the British gentleman as a model. As the father of Nicoll (1762-1852), Mary (1764-1805), and Catherine



*Mary Floyd (Mrs. Benjamin Talmadge), daughter of William Floyd,
detail from the portrait by Ralph Earl in the Litchfield Historical
Society, Litchfield, Conn.*

Publick house, 1744
Sir, I beg your pardon giving me more notice of
the affair with Larkin and I. O'Connell, as you
insisted in such matters as you shall think
best to procure me the kind of Larkin
as mentioned to you before, and as I like
affair with Jonathan Taverser he paid
of getting any money, and have taken
an act of David Howard which he paid
to pay him, and if you will not do the
obligation with an receipt of
your charge I will do that the
affair is settled as soon as I can do
this from your hand for the

W. L. Larkin to Jonathan Taverser
my affairs at New York on 1744

Ezra L'Honnemiet
of Shelter Island

Letter from William Floyd to Ezra L'Honnemiet, owned by Andrew Tucker,
of Shelter Island, N. Y.

(1767-1832), William Floyd probably saw to it that his children conformed to the genteel tradition.

Like the other men of Suffolk County, New York, Floyd had strong ties with New England. Both looked on the Congregational Church as the purest model for setting up a moral civil government. In 1761 William Floyd gave his cousin Richard £10 toward repairing the Caroline Church in Brookhaven; he also subscribed £25 toward buying a parsonage and lands for the church.⁵ A citizen of Brookhaven, Floyd took part in town affairs. He was first elected town trustee in 1769; he was reelected to that office in 1770 and 1771.⁶ In 1758 William Floyd paid a tax of £2 5s. 10d. By court decision the Manor of St. George paid the taxes after 1758. The Floyds consequently paid their share to the Smiths, owners of the Manor. Not until 1795 did William Floyd's name appear again on the town list. At that time his real estate was assessed at £4,500 and his personal estate at £1,000; in 1799 the assessed valuation of his house and land came to \$14,000, while his personal property was valued at \$3,278. Floyd's tax for this year was \$17.27.⁷

In the colonial militia young Floyd rose to a colonelcy, and after the war he became a major general in the state militia. His sash proclaimed his rank. Certainly he carried a sword. An undated receipt shows that Floyd was charged £6 14s. to have one fashioned. On June 2, 1759 he bought a pair of pistols from Garret Rapalje, an importer of dry goods, whose store stood opposite the Fly Market in New York. Another undated statement gives £6 16s. for the price of two "guns" which were probably muskets. Since the surrounding country was alive with game, Floyd devoted much time to hunting. Floyd the colonist suggested the gentleman as hunter, when he ordered Dutch powder, English powder, goose shot, and "two dozen of [the] best Gun flints" (1756); but in October and November, 1783, he might have been a lord who prepared to defend his estate. The British were getting ready to leave New York, but there lurked the possibility of marauders from across the Sound. Perhaps for this reason Floyd sent to Smithtown for "Bagg Shott" and a "Cask of Powder."

(2)

To the left of the figure in the portrait one catches a glimpse of his house, outbuildings, and fields. The date of the house is uncertain, but it was probably built in 1724. The east part gives every indication of having been built first; the middle section which included the stairway and east side of the wide hall were added later. Possibly

the west end of the house was added after the Revolution. Mr. Osborn Shaw, the present historian of the town of Brookhaven, has written:

The details of the window casings and the mouldings are quite different in the middle and west sections of the house and show that these two sections were not built at the same time. In the garret, the west end of the old middle section has some of the original shingles left on the top of what was the west gable end of the house before the west section was added.⁸

The front door had large iron strap hinges. A Dutch door, it had two halves; the iron knocker was nailed to the bottom half. The old fireplace is still intact. Here the kettles were hung from pot chains, hooks of adjustable length, and the swinging crane which allowed the cook to swing the pot away from the fire during the cooking process. A Dutch oven at the side of the fireplace has a warming area under it. Opening into the next room is a large iron cauldron, where the servants used to boil the clothes. There are two hinged doors in front of the cauldron, offering two sides from which the servants could work with poles and keep the wet clothes moving.

The receipts of May and June, 1790, show that Floyd made extensive alterations in the house. Moses, Rogers and Company sent out the iron door knocker, besides six knob locks, six knob latches, eight bolts, and twelve hinges, Floyd also ordered lumber, shingles, glass, lead, sash line, sash weights, sheets of iron, paint, oil, and white, and red lead. From George Lindsay in New York came "One hearth Stone 8 ft 4 In @ 2/16" for the price of £1 os. 10d. and "2 Setts of Chimney pieces @ 3s/ each" for £3 2s. On July 10 Floyd received the following bill:

paid Capt. Hagens for Carrying	
a Load of Stone and other thing[s]	£5-0
and for hair to make Morter	1-0
	6-0
paid for boards	7-10
paid Hagens and Bell	[£]10-8

West of the house stood the well and the blacksmith's shop. In the rear barns for cows, calves, horses, and sheep as well as a granary, two corn cribs, a woodshed, houses for hens and geese, a smoke house, sheds for sheltering carts, and a carriage and harness house roughly encircled a central green. There was doubtless a shop for the shoemaker, who came once a year and stayed until he had fitted everyone with a pair of shoes. The hog pen was a short distance in the orchard; it had been made by digging out an area suffi-

ciently deep to keep the swine from climbing out. The Negro servants lived in cabins scattered round but within a mile of the main house. At the "brick-kil lot" all the bricks were made. Ditches served as boundaries and enclosures for cattle. If William Floyd had his own boat, he doubtless kept it close to the landing. John Hosmer charged Floyd £2 16s. 6d. for "Your Boat Sails (1774)". Moses, Rogers and Company sold him "8 oars for 15s. 10d. (1790)," but few of the Floyd receipts refer to nautical matters.

An important landholder like Floyd needed many helpers as well as farm tools. Of special importance was the blacksmith. He doubtless fashioned the iron strap hinges for the front door. Perhaps he introduced the trammels and swinging crane to the fireplace. The blacksmith also reinforced the wooden plow with iron, fashioned the blade of the hoe, and shod the horses. From bars of finished iron Floyd's blacksmith made tools, implements, locks, and other kinds of iron commodities. Receipts for iron became more common after 1783 than before the Revolutionary War.

Orders for farming implements were rare. Perry, Hayes and Whirbrooke of New York asked £3 for "1 Corn Mile (1769)." Lyde and Rogers charged £3 for "1 mill Saw (1794)." James Macomb, the inventor, gave Floyd permission to set up two "patent horizontal wheels for the use of Gristmills (1794)." They seemed to work well, for Floyd left a full description of his mill (1801).⁹ In an undated statement James Bowne charged sixpence for "syths;" according to another receipt, Floyd paid £1 7s. for "siths." He bought Spanish brown, a reddish brown color, for house paint. William Post charged 14s. 7d. for fifty pounds (1786). Through Richard Woodhull, Jr., Floyd bought "10/pound[s] of Spanish brown at 5d/ a pound" for 4s. 2d. (1767). Two brushes cost 2s. 9d. (1756). Very likely it was to prevent iron rust that Floyd paid £1 os. 1d. for "28/ pound[s] of White Led at 9d a pound (1767)." Woodhull charged £16 for "5/ thousand Shingles at 66/s a thousand (1768)."

Perhaps Floyd bought little livestock before 1783. For 15s. John Hosmer sold "6 lbs small Swine—@ 2/6," and for £8 7s. 6d. "67 lb[s] large D[itt]o (1774)." Floyd paid Thomas Pain £20 for a mare (1763). A pair of oxen purchased from John Hawkins, Jr. came to £28 (1797). Alexander Smith paid Floyd \$200 for a horse (1796).

Although Floyd bought a set of knives and forks for seven shillings (1760), he seemed never to lack for crockery. The receipts show that Floyd purchased such objects as a pair of candlesticks, snuffers, two fans, "2 led pencils," and a stick of sealing wax. A

prize possession must have been the round snuff box, a present from Lafayette; on its lid was depicted a view of the siege of Yorktown. On June 16, 1784, Floyd paid £20 14s. 6d. for a "pr Silver Cans" to Elias Pelletreau, one of the outstanding American silversmiths of the eighteenth century. An order for "2 pad Locks" in 1762 and "2 Secret pad Locks" the next year suggests that Floyd had reason to protect himself against thieving natures.

The Floyds used alspice, ginger, nutmeg, orange peel, and pepper for flavoring. The quantity of sugar used at Mastic was particularly striking. It arrived in barrel and box or in the form of a loaf; it came brown, white, strained, powdered, or in lump. Molasses was another sweetener. The family drank chocolate, coffee, and tea. Rum was a cheap drink for the help; the Floyds and their friends enjoyed malaga, sherry, shrub, and especially Madeira wine. Wheat was generally available for breadstuffs on Long Island, but in 1784 William Floyd ordered a total of six barrels of flour. Since this farm produced butter and cheese, the receipts frequently refer to milk pans, firkens, jugs, and barrels; but not until after the Revolution do the receipts mention them. Orders for apples, cider, and raisins were not common. A note from Selah Strong reads:

You had better soon examine the barrel of Spitzenburgh apples as they have been bought some time I am affraid they may be something defective—I had to pay more for the Apples than I contracted for—before they were delivered they had risen in price and the man I bought them from refused to deliver them unless I would give more for them than at first agreed on—the Cyder is not so sweet as I could wish but was the best I could get . . . (1795).

Up to 1783 William Floyd kept about six of his statements from various tailors. John King and John Laboyteaux in New York served him before the war. While Floyd and his family lived at Middletown, Connecticut, Henry Rockwell and Asahel Johnson saw that he was suitably dressed. In Philadelphia this task went to John M. Calla and John Stillé. Perhaps Floyd could distinguish a piece of calamanco, a glossy woolen stuff, because the Flemish weavers had supposedly woven checks on the surface of one side. Durant, a woolen stuff, was also known as "everlasting," and frequently appears in the receipts as "lasting." Tammy, a fine worsted, had a glazed finish. Baize, a coarse woolen material with a long nap, was used for linings, coverings and curtains, as well as for shirts and petticoats. Buckram, a coarse gummed linen, and shalloon, a closely woven fabric, made good linings. Mrs. Floyd doubtless asked for dimity whenever she wished to redecorate a bedroom, although a

suit of dimity is mentioned in one of the later receipts. Calico in Floyd's time referred to cotton cloth imported from the East, while chintz was the name given the painted or stained calicoes from India.

Perhaps Mrs. Floyd and her daughters wore black bombazine, whenever they went into mourning. Later on they could always put it to other uses, because this twilled or corded material of silk and worsted was noted for durability. Possibly Mrs. Floyd asked for mode, a thin glossy material, when she wanted to make hoods or scarves. Dresses of peeling, a thin fabric, did well for warm weather. Summer evenings called for tiffany, a thin transparent silk, or satinette, an imitation of satin either woven in silk or in silk and cotton.

A large household needed yards of linen for sheets, table cloths, and clothing. Floyd was away in Philadelphia attending the Continental Congress on May 22, 1776, when Benjamin Wells of New York charged him £13 15s. for "1 ps Linen 25 yards @ 11/." The following note accompanied his statement:

I have sent you the piece of Linin by Brian Connor which is to be left for you at Cross Keys. I am sorry the present times makes it come so high but if you do not think it will Suit you you may Return it by the Bearer for I can get 2/ pr. yd. more for it here. I ware latley at your [house] & your family is all well & other friendes.

The Floyds bought buttons of all sizes and descriptions — trimming, large fancy, taste, paper, hair, gilt, star spangled, and "turtel Shell Coat butones." For tailoring and dressmaking they also purchased pins, hooks and eyes, linings, lace, tape, thread, and twist.

In the colony of New York, Staten Island, Long Island, and a narrow strip on both sides of the Hudson were devoted to agriculture. Wheat was the staple crop, while rye and barley were of less importance. Farmers on Long Island also grew oats, corn, flax, and common grass they cut for hay. Because of impoverished soil and poor cultivation harvests were rarely large. A farm generally ranged in size from 100 to 150 acres. Farmers used timber for fencing, while here and there the scarcity of trees forced them to adopt hedges. Herds of inferior stock grazed over the pastures. Perhaps the farmers in Suffolk County had greater numbers of cattle and sheep than any of the neighboring country in New York and New England.

A Long Island farmer relied on the harrow, cart, and plow—the same tools his forefathers had known in the Middle Ages. The workers on Floyd's estate doubtless used scythes to cut the grass. They probably harvested grain with a sickle, threshed it on the threshing floor with a flail, or beat it out by the hoofs of horses and

oxen; they hauled the grain to the great-armed windmills at the eastern end of Long Island, and generally took home the grist to make provisions for winter months.

The ordinary farm produced food, fuel, and clothing. The farmer shipped any surplus from the nearest landing to market; the ocean was the highway for Long Island to New England and New York. In this way the farmer gained a small income, and enjoyed a better lot than the man struggling in the back country or on the frontier. William Floyd's wealth, however, was greater than the average farmer's. His father had built up a large estate which under William's management continued to prosper. But his fortune never compared with those who lived in a princely style on the Hudson.

The receipts gradually reveal the Floyd estate as a productive unit. The first indication seems to come with the statement of March 24, 1754, when Nicoll Floyd paid Benjamin Hawkhurst fifty bushels of wheat. William Wallace took forty bushels of flaxseed on board his vessel; the cargo was bound for Mr. Andrew Baron, "the Desig[n]s of the sees only Excepted (1774)." In 1795 Selah Strong wrote to William Floyd: "I have not sold your flaxseed—nor have I recd. the money from Mr. Peacock for your cattle tho called for it a great number of times." By exchanging cheese, butter, lard, ham, and possibly leather Floyd was able to pay creditors like Selah Strong and James Woodhull.

During the colonial period William Ganad signed six receipts for making shoes. After the war Floyd paid Zebulon Jessup, Daniel Hammond, Josiah Raynor, Samuel Homan, and Obadiah Hudson at various times for shoemaking. Jessup, Hudson, and Homan wrote our fairly detailed statements, including such items as tanning and curing of leather. The price of shoes for the children figured conspicuously. Thirty-four pairs of shoes cost £4 5s. (1790). Floyd paid Josiah Raynor £5 17s. 6d. for "making 47 (1791)." A pair for Nicoll came to 12s. (1784); shoes for Nathaniel Smith, ward of William Floyd, cost 7s. 6d. (1793). Resoling Nathaniel's shoes came to 2s. 2d. By 1800 Daniel Hammond charged 3s. a pair, making two pairs for Mary and Nancy and one pair for Mrs. Floyd.

To Samuel Carman fell the task of cleaning and dyeing. His bills for tentering, fulling, scouring, and pressing cloth begin about 1789. He dressed "Cersey" blankets, black skirts, and dyed various materials "London Brown" and black. In the same statement Carman would often include an item for sawing wood.

In managing his estate William Floyd employed free skilled labor; but like many other New Yorkers he depended on slaves. Some of

them he probably bought at the slave market at the foot of Wall Street. Floyd paid William Smith £38 "which is in full for one half of anegroe boy named Phillip formerly belonging to Jonathan Smith, Deceas'd (1758)." A Negro girl cost £33 14s. 8d. (1786). In 1795 Floyd apparently owned eleven Negroes; the single names of Gin, Hagan, Jack, Harry, Rachel, and Abby on a shoe bill suggest those of servants. Perhaps the six pairs of "Shammy Gloves" for 16s. were meant for slaves (1756); possibly the large orders from Hayman Levy and Jonathan Lawrence in New York were also for them. The "36 pr Trowsers," "12 Drab Jackets," and a dozen felt hats were probably work clothes (1784). According to an undated receipt, Walter Frazer charged 8s. for "making apr of briches for Negro." Occasionally a servant caused trouble. A receipt of 1786 records the theft of £16 from Jonathan Havens.

Either William Floyd and his family were unusually healthy, or they let nature take its course in case of sickness. Medical care is not a prominent item among the Floyd papers. The following "Recipe for a Cold" offers the only description of a homemade remedy:

1 lb of Allecompain cut in Slises
 1 lb of brown Shuger Candy
 1 lb of honey
 1 Quart of white wine vinegar
 pound the Shuger Candy
 put it in a new Stone pot
 put A Cover of Ry doe &
 bake it in a oven for 2 hours
 that is het for bread
 take A table Spoon full night & Morning

Receipts from the apothecary date from the time of Nicoll Floyd's last illness. John Carpenter charged 14s. 6d. for "appotaries Stuff," including "Sperma Coeti" 6s., "Rhabard" 6s., and "Gentian" 2s. 6d. (1775). On March 22, 1756 Floyd paid Dr. George Muirson for "Nine pounds fiveteen Shills & 8d In full for Medecins Administered to his father & family before his Decease Also ten Shillings for Medecins Administered to his Sister Mary Since." Receipts for the early nineteenth century are few and brief. In 1803 Dr. Daniel Robert charged William Floyd 8s. for medicines. Dr. Richard Treat asked £5 16s. for "Sundry Medicines & attendance from the 21st Octobr to the 20th of Novr:" but he neglected to set down the year.

Perhaps because slaves were an expensive investment, Floyd watched over their welfare. An undated statement reads: "Mr floid

the sickness your negron the fellow was sick six weeks my bill is . . . [£]13-18-6." Dr. Thomas Tarbell visited "your Negroman" eleven times, giving him "Sundry Medicans" for £12 6s. 6d. (1761). A German physician charged "Sixteen Shills for Doctoring a Molatto Girl named Phepae . . . (1791)." Medicine for Elijah came to £1 4s., while those for Dick totaled 16s. (1792). Floyd paid Dr. Daniel Roberts £4 8s. to inoculate "11 blacks—at 8/;" but the price came to 16s. each or a total of £1 12s. for the two Miss Floyds (1795). The proper care of slaves called for adequate housing and feeding. These were doubtless cheap enough at Mastic, but in the city Floyd paid £14 14s. to board his servant six weeks (1784). In Brooklyn "Supper & logging" for his "Nagro" added up to 1s. 6d. (1786).

In his portrait William Floyd stands as the leader of a large family. Three months before his father's death on March 8, 1755, William had come of age taking over family responsibilities and the direction of the estate. He paid the bills, and wrote out the statements for his creditors to sign. To all appearances he scrupulously guarded the interests of his brother Charles and sisters Ruth, Tabitha, Charity, Mary, Catherine and Anna, until they came of age. Nicoll Floyd left each of daughters "a negro Girl a Bed—and reasonable Furniture for the same;" each daughter could claim £650 either on her twenty-first birthday or as soon as she was married.

The sisters of William Floyd did not lack for suitors. As each one married, her husband took over the duty of signing the receipts—Nathaniel Woodhull for Ruth, Daniel Smith for Tabitha, Ezra L'Hommedieu for Charity, Edmund Smith, Jr. for Mary, Thomas Thomas for Catherine, and Hugh Smith for Anna. Two of his brothers-in-law probably exercised a profound influence over William Floyd. Nathaniel Woodhull undoubtedly put him in touch with the more liberal elements in the colony. It was said of Ezra L'Hommedieu that he consistently furthered Floyd's political interests in preference to his own. L'Hommedieu, moreover, was devoted to the Floyd family, for he apparently did all he could to advance its economic interests.

William Floyd left no statement of his total wealth, but he kept a record of many of his financial transactions. Most important of these was the debt of £1,500 owed the heirs of Nicoll Floyd by Jonathan Trumbull, governor of Connecticut, John Alden, Eliphalet Dyer, and Captain Joseph Trumbull. The Floyds made the loan on May 24, 1759, but not until 1765 did the debtors pay something on the interest. The next year Jonathan Trumbull's business suffered a reversal from which it never recovered. In 1770 the Floyds

threatened to take legal action. The Trumbulls pledged certain repayments, but all in vain! Ezra L'Hommedieu told Jonathan Trumbull that the Floyds were "very uneasy;" they blamed L'Hommedieu for having urged them to believe in the fair words from Connecticut.

By November, 1770, the Trumbulls sent £359 os. 5d. to Mastic. The Floyds, however, had had to hire Jedediah Elderkin of Connecticut for their lawyer. His commissions seemed just; but the more there was for Elderkin the less there was for the Floyds. Then, too, whoever brought the money to Mastic must be provided for. The messenger claimed £10 out of the £359 after crossing the Sound in 1770. Very likely William Floyd sought out easier ways of collection. Passage for him and his horse came to 16s. in April, 1770, while expenses for three and one-half days added up to £2 11s. He presumably learned that he saved nothing by hiring a horse in New England. In 1774 Floyd spent £6 11s. going to Lebanon about the money; later in the year he paid an additional 16s. to "bring over 100 £."

Whenever the interest from Connecticut reached Mastic, William Floyd divided it in nine parts. To Charles Floyd went two-ninths, because he received his mother's share as well as his own. Catherine and Anna, the youngest children of Nicoll Floyd, received their share of the bonds and obligations on coming of age. The family had suffered losses, but these were not grave. Recall that each sister had received £650 on their father's death. On November 11, 1767, Catherine withdrew £930 9s. 10d. not counting what was due her on the bonds. Two years later Anna acknowledged her right to her full legacy of £1309 4s. 7d.

Neighbors often called on the Floyds for help. Thomas Conklin paid back an unspecified sum, because they had helped him meet his debts. Occasionally William Floyd called on the courts to force repayment. His "Memorandum on the 3rd of July 1771" read:

the costs of the Suits against David Cook are £13-6-0. But Mr. Hillhouse Says as the prospect of Getting any-thing from Cook is so small I will throw off all for my trouble; provided he could be paid only the money which he had paid out of pocket in those Suits — which I, William Floyd, paid in behalf of my brother Thomas Thomas, it amounting to £6-13-4.

Floyd presumably showed understanding of his neighbors; he seemed to give them every chance to pay before calling on the law. Jeremy Currin borrowed an amount he could not repay. Floyd asked L'Hommedieu to see that the debt was settled in court. In 1764 Currin appealed to Floyd, who notified L'Hommedieu:

Jeremy Currin . . . tells me his Circum-Stances are very Low, but at the same time Imagines, that the whole of every thing he has would amount to the money or near it, and Expresses awillingness to Resign all more or Less, his apparent Honesty makes me have Compassion on him. I have told him if he will out of the whole of his Effects make in Cash to the amount of £40-0 and pay to you I would have his Bond Delivered up.¹⁰

William Floyd found himself deeply involved in the case of Charles Jeffery Smith, "minister of a dissenting church" in Brookhaven. On separating from her husband Mrs. Ruth Brewster entrusted her bonds, notes, and money to Floyd and Nathaniel Woodhull in 1763. On her request three years later they gave her possessions to Charles Jefferey Smith, her son by a previous marriage. In 1768 Smith became Floyd's debtor by £480 for the purchase of a tract of land. He also spent his mother's money on other tracts in New York and Virginia, but death removed Smith before he could discharge his debts.

Smith had had time to write a will, and name executors in both colonies. In Virginia Julius King Burbridge and Bartholomew Dandridge of New Kent County sold Smith's lands, but refused to give any of Smith's money to the New York executors; these holdings, reasoned the Virginians, were subject only to creditors in the Old Dominion. Quite the contrary, answered the New Yorkers. Smith's Virginia estate was subject to the payment of his debts in any of the thirteen colonies. The "Actings and Pretences" of Burbridge and Dandridge did violence to "Equity and Good Conscience," charged the New York executors, for they had laid hands on an amount more than sufficient to pay Smith's debts.

The Smith estate paid Floyd £270 17s. 9d. in June, 1771, and £27 16s. 7d. in January, 1772. Floyd and other New York creditors resorted to law. In Virginia they hired William Burnett Brown and Peter Lyons, who had been one of the lawyers to argue against Patrick Henry in the "Parson's Cause." On July 1, 1776, Floyd sent Lyons a copy of the Smith bond "proved before the Mayor of Philadelphia." But ever since the colonials had laid siege to the British in Boston, courts in the Old Dominion had been closed, wrote Lyons. He despaired of British justice, "until We have a free Trade established and the Debtors have an opportunity of raising Money by [the] Sale of their Crops, which are now spoiling on their Hands."¹¹ By 1779 Floyd seemed willing to settle for what little he could get from Virginia.

There is little evidence among the receipts to show that Floyd

borrowed extensively. His bond to Joseph Brewster was settled on October 3, 1792, when Floyd paid him £60 "at the Coart house."

(3)

The portrait presents William Floyd the conservative revolutionary. The Boston Tea Party (December 16, 1773) might have shocked him, but the decision of Parliament to meet force with force doubtless filled Floyd with foreboding. The men of Suffolk County met together in almost every town, and voted aid and sympathy for Massachusetts. They protested against the British decision to close the port of Boston; they urged a strict committee of correspondence.

Committees of correspondence helped unite the colonies; from them came the suggestion that colonial representatives come together and agree on measures for the redress of grievances and maintenance of rights. In August, 1774 Suffolk County sent William Floyd to the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Caution marked the deliberations of this gathering, but hereafter it served to spearhead the revolutionary movement. It could do little more than adopt a declaration of rights and grievances, call for an economic boycott, and propose a second congress. Local committees meanwhile encouraged men of their own kind, disarmed the loyalists, and forced signatures from unwilling signers to support the boycott or Association. But committees and congresses had no effect on Great Britain. Yankee farmers and British redcoats clashed in Massachusetts at Lexington and Concord (April 19, 1775). The Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia had been in session a little over a month, when the delegates heard about the bloodshed at Bunker Hill (June 17).

The committee of safety at Brookhaven was apparently late about "Comeing . . . into Congressional Measures," explaining: "... opposition ran so high heretofore in some parts of this Town that an Attempt of this kind would perhaps have Answered no valuable purpose but we verily believe the past opposition arose for want of better information in a great measure."¹² On September 5, 1775 William Floyd was nominated colonel of the Western Regiment of Suffolk County at a meeting in Smithtown. On paper he commanded thirteen companies, a total of 1030 officers and men. Floyd's men more than likely used muskets. Floyd reported:

The Regiment is about two thirds furnished with Bayonets and the others are geting them as fast as they Can Get them made; They are furnished with half pound of powder and two pound of Ball pr man,

and a Magazine in the Regiment to furnish them with about as much more when it Shall be wanted, they are pretty Industrious in fixing their Accoutrements, and I hope in a Short time they will be tolerably well prepared.¹³

Absenteeism in the colonial militia was notorious. Probably Floyd's regiment never attained its full quota of men. One of the captains reported: "Gen Woodhull & Coll Floyd . . . told the Officers that they Need not be Exact about the Number & from that the Officers have Done nothing about Compleating their Compliment."¹⁴

The Brookhaven Committee of Safety found it hard to pay the expenses occasioned by alarms and raids. James Fitch of Coram demanded compensation, because "he had his mare much abused and killed by being Rode on the late Alarm to Easthampton . . ." After learning of the theft of his bridle and saddle during an alarm, Zophar Hawkins wanted to bring suit for recovery.¹⁵ Tories like Richard Floyd, cousin of William, opposed the committee of safety.

" . . . from the beginning [they have] taken every method to seduce the ignorant and counteract the measures recommended for redress of grievances. They d - - n all Congresses and Committees, wishing they were in h - - l. They have declared they will furnish the [British] men-of-war and cutters with provisions.¹⁶

Suffolk County elected Floyd to the Continental Congress on April 22, 1775. He probably arrived in Philadelphia on May 10, and very likely attended Congress the next day, when the credentials of the New York delegation were read. Floyd signed a delegation letter of May 18, but not until June 24 does the *Journal* speak of him as present. Floyd took advantage of his visit to buy a new suit. In May John M. Calla charged £1 8s. for "Making a Sute of Clothes." In June Floyd paid him 18s. for three waistcoats and 12s. for two pairs of "Breeches." Calla also charged 14s. for a "Jean Coat." On June 27, 1775, Floyd settled with this tailor for £6 9s. 11d.

Floyd's stay in Philadelphia was brief. By September 21 he was back in Congress. The delegation letter of October 16 showed him absent on public business, but by November 3 Floyd had returned, attending Congress as late as February 11, 1776. The *Journals* have no further record of his presence until May 3. From that date to July 4 Floyd's record is clear enough. As a member of the New York delegation Floyd served in a liaison capacity, keeping the Provincial Congress of New York informed about reconciliation, loyalists, Indian affairs, paper money, local military defense aid to the Continental Army, and the many problems involved in military provisioning.

Early in 1776 a naval engagement had taken place near Philadelphia. Floyd reported:

two Men of War yesterday came up the River with some tenders and prize vessels with them between wilmington and Chester they were met by 13 Roegalleys of this place when a Battle Ensued which lasted most all the afternoon, with very heavy firing on Both Sides, I have not heard [that] the Galleys have Suffered any Dammage, the Roe Buck which is the largest Ship was Obligated to Stop the Bullet holes Round her Side and at highwater Ran a ground; while the men of War was Engaged, our vessel the (Wasp) went out of Wilmington River and Retook one of the prize Vessels the provence Ship mounting 16 or 18 guns full man[n]ed is gone to the Assistance of the Galleys . . ." ¹⁷

On July 21, 1776 Peter Lyons wrote from Virginia: "You best know, what prospect there is of our obtaining free Trade, or any Trade soon,—surely the British Court will get tired of pursuing a System so ruinous to that Nation, and ere long, propose reasonable and honorable terms of peace . . ." ¹⁸ But George III had proclaimed the colonies in a state of rebellion, and was ready to hire German mercenaries to do his subduing. In America Thomas Paine gave fitting words to popular thought and feeling. So effectively did he exalt independence that it became an object all sublime to patriots. From Great Britain the Howe brothers came as commissioners of peace; but the prospect of a general backed by a mighty army and an admiral supported by a great navy taking "Blessed are the peacemakers" for their text could only delight the cynical.

The futile errand of the Howes was not lost on Floyd. The colonists must stand ready to defend their liberties "another way." Floyd noted: "... it Cannot be long before our provencial Congress will think it Necessary to take up Some more Stable form of Government than what is now Exercised in that provence—the two Carolinas have Done it, and virginea I expect will Soon Do the Same." ¹⁹

On June 7 Richard Henry Lee of Virginia offered a resolution of independence in Congress. The next day the New York delegation asked for fresh instructions, but the conservative Provincial Congress refused to let its delegates vote for independence. In Philadelphia a delegate from South Carolina observed the New York delegation, and wrote to John Jay:

Recollect the manner in which your Colony is at this time represented. Clinton has Abilities but is silent in general and wants (when he does speak) that Influence to which he is intitled. Floyd, Wisner, Lewis and Alsop tho' good men, never quit their chairs.²⁰

The rest of the colonies voted for independence on July 2, and formally adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4. The New York delegates had to wait a few days before giving their assent. The first of his delegation to sign the Declaration of Independence was William Floyd.

Nearly all the citizens of Suffolk County approved the Declaration of Independence. In Brookhaven, however, a vehement opponent was heard to

... Dam the Congress ... and was amind that all present should agree with him to resist and oppose the Congress and all Military Officers ... holding Commissions under the Congress. He particularly Dam'd Col Wm Floyd saying he came home from Congress on purpose to make Disturbance and the Devil would have him for he would go to Hell for what he had done ...²¹

(4)

General George Washington and the Continental Army claimed victory, when British forces sailed from Boston for Halifax (March 17, 1776). The British, however, came back and defeated the Americans at the battle of Long Island (August 27, 1776). The plight of his state looked dark and obscure to Floyd in Philadelphia. A host of uncertainties besieged him. Was it true that New York and Brooklyn had been put to the torch? What had become of General Nathaniel Woodhull? What had happened to his own family? Where were his friends and neighbors? Was the Provincial Congress still in session? If not, on whom could he draw for money? Floyd asked:

... is New York to be Evacuated as well as Long Island with out fighting, or will our army like the Romans of old Consider the Invaluable prize for which they are Contending and with their fortitude Attack the Enemy where Ever they can find them ...²²

Nathaniel Woodhull met his tragic end shortly after the battle of Long Island. According to a family story, Mrs. Floyd had time to bury the family silver before she fled across the Sound with her three children. Retreating through New Jersey with the British in pursuit, the Continental Army seemed to melt away. The American cause looked hopeless; but Washington took up a position behind the Delaware, and struck the British at Trenton (December 26, 1776) and Princeton (January 3, 1777). The patriots took heart, as the British retreated to New Brunswick.

The Floyds settled at Middletown, Connecticut. On October 17 William Floyd reported:

I am now going to try to get off Some of my Effects from the Island if it is possible and shall be absent from Congress [in Philadelphia] a few Days I beg you would Excuse me as it is the first time I have absented my Self; But it happens at a time when no Important matter was like to Come before me.²³

On October 28 Governor Jonathan Trumbull ordered an armed party to cross the Sound and bring back Floyd's possessions. Instead the raiders captured two sloops in Brookhaven harbor loading with wood for the British.

Long Island was a valuable prize of war. The inhabitants of its three counties reportedly paid two-thirds of the colonial taxes. The surrounding waters yielded shell fish of all kinds and quantities of fish; field and forest furnished wild fowl of all sorts. In exchange for British merchandise the country people bartered hogs, calves, hams, lambs, poultry, and smoked beef; they probably welcomed hard money from the foe for planks, boards, and shingles.

Smuggling flourished along the Sound. Many men in Suffolk County engaged in the illicit or "London" trade; but they were also willing to spy on the British and act as guides for American raiding parties. Thomas Hazard wrote:

I shall wait to know what the Movements of the Enemy will be, or whether another Campaign will be in this Country before I set out on a speculating Voyage, unless there may be occasion [for the British] to go for Virginia before we can know.²⁴

In another letter Hazard said:

A Privateer of 8 Guns & 22 Men was drove ashore at Guilford & secur'd the Sloop will be got off, Capt Giles Sage of Middletown was taken by them coming from the W[est] Indies & was on board, & got home safe. . . . There has been a number off arrivals lately at N[ew] London from the W[est] Indies, in particular T: Mumfords new Sloop which he wholly owns with a Cargo of 100 Hogds Rum &c.

If Capt: Guion should be in Phila: please to ask him whether any part of his Brig, will be to dispose off, if so what part, what she will Cost, & what her Cargo, and desire him to write me.²⁵

Occasionally William Floyd reported the activities of American privateers. To L'Hommedieu he wrote: "Cap^t Fanning has in the Weasle, taken a Snow Bound from Midcara to Quebeck with 180 pipes of Wine on Board, the prize is Safe Arrieved in Boston, and the Weasle at this place, all well—and Expects to Sail in a few Days on another Cruise."²⁶ Congratulating L'Hommedieu in September, 1782, Floyd said: "I wish you Joy with the prizes your Vessel has taken, by Computation, your part will be worth about 12 or 1500 Doll^s."²⁷

Floyd's own efforts to rescue his personal effects were hopeless. Public business, however, rarely strayed far from his attention. Arms and munitions were hard enough to find for the Continental Army; but as a member of the committee on clothing Floyd must have been impressed with the insuperable difficulties of trying to clothe the soldier. On March 29, 1777, the New York Convention passed a resolution recalling William Floyd and other delegates from Philadelphia.

In the new state government Governor George Clinton appointed Floyd and Ezra L'Hommedieu senators from the Southern District. Floyd served in the Council of Safety, and generally presided over the Senate when the governor left the chair. The legislature occasionally asked him to administer certain appropriations and give an accounting of their expenditure to the governor. Together with L'Hommedieu and Thomas Dering, Floyd advised Governor Trumbull to permit refugees to return to Long Island only on permission from the state of New York. Floyd was also among the delegates from New York who went to New Haven in January and February, 1778, to regulate the price of labor and settle other matters. Governor Clinton chose him as one of two commissioners to obtain clothing and money on loan.

When the state government of New York did not demand his presence, William Floyd stayed with his family in Middletown. He escaped the wretchedness of refugees of humbler station. Many of these found themselves without food, clothing, or money. Occasionally they risked the chance of capture by returning to their old homes to see what could be leased or sold for a pittance. Had they not lost their boats, many of the refugees could have carried hay and cordwood back to Connecticut. There were also those who sought permission to return to Long Island regardless of the consequences. On August 26, 1777, Thomas Dering and John Hulbert wrote:

Many very poor Families are Constantly Applying for Permitts to Return to Long Island with What Littel Effects they have and if Mention is mayd of going to Dutches County it appears like Death to them. . . . The Circumstance of Many Families is Truly Distressing, [here] They have not the Means of Supplying and are in no way to Attain it. On Long Island they have a Small Place and with Industry they may supply their Families with Necessaries of Life and we cant see that they would in the least administer Comfort to the Enemy, they cannot be of any service to our Grand Camp if they remain. . . .²⁸

The few remaining receipts from the Middletown period belong to 1777. They show that Floyd frequently paid inflated prices. Zebulon

Storking charged £12 or \$40 for "Eleven Bundles of hay." Henry Rockwell's tailoring bill, however, came to £3 9s. 9d. for material and labor. Thomas Johnson asked £12 3s. "for the Grass on my meadow Lot for the year past." Bill Smith received £35 9s. 6d. for beef. The fee of schoolmaster Samuel Goodrich was twenty-eight shillings a quarter. By the time Christmas holidays arrived young Nicoll Floyd had spent two quarters at school; so his father paid £2 16s. to Mr. Goodrich. A "great number of Schollars" flocked to the school-house, wrote Mrs. Floyd. When the weather turned unpleasantly hot, she kept Polly and Kitty at home to do their reading and writing. Like other Long Islanders the Floyds must have longed for the time when they could return home. In his letter of February 9, 1779, L'Hommedieu wrote: "I would ask your Advice, whether if we do not hear of more favorable Accounts the ensuing season, of a Prospect of Peace, than at present, it will not be best, by March, or when I return home, to hire ground for Planting Corn & mowing." ²⁹

Regardless of American defeats, the year 1777 was disastrous for Great Britain. The Redcoats who moved out of New York to capture Philadelphia learned too late that they should have been pushing northward along the Hudson to meet another British army marching down from Montreal. These troops under General John Burgoyne met defeat at Saratoga (September 19—October 7, 1777). France now entered the war as an ally of the United States. Washington wintered at Valley Forge, where in spite of bitter sufferings the Continental Army trained and reorganized under Baron von Steuben. As the British marched out of Philadelphia in May, 1778, Washington struck their flank at Monmouth Court House, but failed to stop them from reaching New York. The Continental Army pitched camp at White Plains. After 1778 operations in the north became largely unimportant.

In the Spring of 1778 the British withdrew their troops to the east of Jamaica. Whale boat privateers from Connecticut soon infested the Sound, and Long Island Tories found themselves the sport of Yankee marauders. The British struck back in September. Their army needed cattle, they said, as they marched into eastern Long Island. Benjamin Floyd, one of William's cousins, found them expensive guests; for while he entertained the British generals, their soldiers plundered his estate. In 1779 the British started the rebuilding of fortifications in eastern Long Island, a costly and futile operation. Ezra L'Hommedieu wrote William Floyd: "at Southampton and Sag . . . are stationed about 1000 Troops who very much distress

the Inhabitants & 'tis expected before spring they will take away from the Inhabitants all their Provisions." ³⁰ Mrs. Floyd told of the suffering of friends, writing: "... there house [is] filled with Soldiers there Bread taken from them there Cattle killed ten a day to support ... [the soldiers] ... many ... have come off and left their families at the mercy of the Enemy my father's hous is full..." ³¹ Thomas Hazard reported: "Mr. Fester informs, the Enemy have pul'd down his house to the Ground & are building a Fort on the spot, their insolence & brutality . . . increases." ³² Tories themselves denounced their defenders as "worthless, vagabond, thieving banditti." According to Hazard, the British were also fitting out a number of flat-bottomed boats. They struck a series of blows at Connecticut from July 5 to July 12, when Tryon, the royal governor of New York, led attacks on New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk. Major Benjamin Tallmadge later hit back by successfully attacking the fort at Lloyd's Neck.

Viewed by a loyalist, William Floyd was a man of "indifferent abilities," and violently opposed to Great Britain. Floyd's overseer at Mastic was William Phillips. As told by a loyalist, Phillips sold the produce from this valuable farm in New York; he remitted the hard money he received to Floyd together "with all such intelligence" as he could learn. Ordered before General de Lancey at Huntington, Phillips took the oath of allegiance to the King; he swore neither to leave the island nor to send information nor cash to the rebels; he also promised to give an annual accounting of the farm to the crown. But no sooner had Phillips settled this matter than he went over to Connecticut. In 1779 he returned to Long Island "to bring off effects of Col. Floyd and his own (and get £600 then due Col. F. from Dan'l Downs)." ³³ The British captured Phillips and his "plundering party," but he was soon exchanged as a prisoner of war.

On April 19, 1780, William Floyd submitted a memorial to the General Assembly of Connecticut. His account of what happened at Mastic contrasted sharply with the loyalist version. The memorial read in part:

... Some time After the Enemy Got possession of New York and Long Island, two persons; (and as I am told Tories) who fled to the Enemy from this State, obtained a permit of Governor Tryon to Take possession of My Estate which they Did, And turned off the Steward that I had on it — who was obliged to leave the Island and come to this State for Safety

The above persons took on my Estate a Considerable Quantity of Stock of Different kinds the Greatest part of my Household furni-

ture, and all my farming utensils, with Some Beds, and Bed[d]ling with other Cloathing.⁸⁴

Floyd asked permission to send for such stock and effects as might be found. The General Assembly gave its consent.

Later the royal governor of New York commanded the inhabitants in certain districts of Long Island to cut down the wood on the estates of William Floyd and William Smith, and send it by water to New York. The governor set the rate of pay, wrote a loyalist, and named the day when the wood should arrive at Smith Landing. Failure to obey would result in harsh treatment, read his proclamation, but apparently no man turned out, not a stick was cut, and no one was punished.

At least the British and Tories were known foes. Refugees in Connecticut and patriots on Long Island, however, thought they had good reason to cry, "God save us from our friends!" In Middletown Thomas Hazard wrote: "... I have between 8 or 9000 Dollars in the two Emmissions [of paper money] call'd in, and ... I don't chuse to pay taxes for it, in this grasping State." Later he added: "... I ... believe we must content ourselves with another Twelve Months confinement among the Connectekites."⁸⁵ The Summer of 1781, noted Floyd, was "a very General time of health, and avery fine Season good Crops of Every kind and the people of this State Get[t]ing money much faster than Ever they Did in their lives." Floyd explained more fully to L'Hommedieu who was in Philadelphia:

I have been two Days at hartford attending the Tryal of Mr Wells's Goods which was plundered on Long Island, the Cause went against him, as Almost all others have done against the long Island people, and it appears to me to be amere Mockery of Justice for those Courts to Try Causes Between the Inhabitants of this State, and the people of Long Island who they may plunder, for the Courts are Governed by no Law or Rule But the Governors Commission and Instructions given to those Boatmen, and so long as they have his Commission and Instructions for plundering and Rob[b]ing the Inhabitants of the State of New York, So long will their Courts Justifie them in Doing it.

The Reasons which are given for so Extraordinary a Measure as the Governor of this State Extending his Authority or Jurisdiction over the Inhabitants of our State, is, that they Cannot prevent their own people from Breaking the Laws against Illisic Trade, so long as there is any Goods on Long Island, Therefore they must plunder the honest, and Worthy Inhabitants of Long Island, in order to keep their own people honest. But this Reason appears to Me to be fal[l]acious, and is only Intended as a pretext, or Excuse, for Enriching themselves out of our State. you are very Sensible that the General Idea of these

people, is, that whatever they Can Get, in this way, out of the State of New York is Clear Gain.

They have taken from the County of Suffolk only, whose inhabitants are known to be more universally good whigs than almost any part of America, to the amount of upwards of one hundred thousand pounds hard moneys worth, in Cash, men, womens and Childrens Cloth[els], plate, furniture, and Merchandise; This is Impoverishing the State of New York, and Enriching the State of Connecticut to that amount, (Most unjustly) Beside[s], the County of Westchester and the Other parts of the State as I have been Informed, have Suffered by them to a much Greater amount.

The Insults and abuse which the Inhabitants of Long Island have Recd from them and which they are Dayly Receiving, is intolerable; for Every man of property there when he lays Down to Sleep is under Apprehensions of being Alarmed by abody of armed men Round his house before morning for the Avowed purpose of Robbing him, and if he Refuses to unbolt his Doors and let them in, he is Sure to Recv^e a Volley of Balls through his house, by which many women and Children have Very narrowly Escaped [with] their lives; Some of our best friends who have been Serving us the whole war they have whipt most Severely, Some they have made to Ransom their houses from fire, with hard Money And I have lately heard of Several Instances where they have after Rob[b]ing the houses hung the people up by the Neck, untill they have been nearly Dead, to Extort from them where they had hid their money. and upon the whole their Situation is Almost as Distressed as the Inhabitants on our frontiers who are Exposed to the Indians Except their Scalping, and that is not much worse than the Treatment which they are Dayly Receiving.

It was hoped that upon the Representation which Governor Clinton made to Governor Trumbull of this matter, that he would have Called in all those Commissions, But so far from that, he Justifies them, and Still Continues to Grant more, and I do Imagine that the Expectation is, that when General Washington is Oppering against New York those boats may fall on the Inhabitants toward the west end of Long Island and plunder them that they Cannot now Come at, by this means what may be left by the Enemy will be brought into Connecticut, and the Inhabitants of the Island Reduced to poverty.³⁶

About a hundred whale boats had commissions from Governor Trumbull, said Floyd, writing: "...his Excellency Receives Ten hard Dollars for Each Commission; this is a pretty perquisite, and may opperate as a Stimulus to wish the Business might be Continued." Trumbull was virtually extending his government over Suffolk County. He himself had declared all British goods on Long Island forfeit to Connecticut. Floyd observed: "...if ... [Trumbull] has authority to do this, it must Extend to any thing Else that he shall think proper ..."³⁷

Connecticut lawyers, protested Floyd, also battered on the misfortunes of Long Islanders. He wrote:

Lawyers who have been pleading Causes for their own people all their Days, for one, or at most two Dolls a Cause, have Encouraged the Long Island people to put in their Claimes and Stand tryal for their property, and when they have plead[ed] for them, have Demanded from twenty to Thirty five Guineas aSuit, this has been Demanded when they have lost their property, as I have understood, so that it Seems as if all Ranks of men here, were Determined to pluck Strangers.³⁸

Floyd concluded: "If the Enemy were to Quit our Country to morrow, it is Clear to me that the State of New York has Suffered more Damage from the State of Connecticut than from the Enemy, tho we have had the war in our State for five Years."³⁹

The harvests might be large for the rest of the country, but from Long Island in 1782 came news of sickness and death; "both at Southhold and Southhampton, Col^o Gardner is Dead", wrote Floyd, "Judge Post very like to Die."⁴⁰ Yet life in Connecticut was undoubtedly far from bitter. Floyd probably found interesting company at Yale University. On September 16, 1782, he wrote to L'Hommedieu: "I have Recd. your favour of the 3d Instant but being from home all last week at New-haven Commencement did not get it till it was too late to write by last post."⁴¹ Floyd also looked after his neighbors from Suffolk County. In March, 1782, he endorsed the petition of Ebenezer Dayton to the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, when Dayton asked for a commission to operate his own whaleboat.⁴² Dayton apparently cruised against the British successfully, but in Middletown the authorities seized his prize of war. Floyd presumably took up Dayton's cause, and in September Connecticut restored what had been captured.⁴³

Floyd scarcely despaired of justice from this state. He would otherwise never have appealed to the General Assembly in December, 1781, for help in recovering about £300 due from Thomas Fanning, a loyalist who held property in Connecticut as well as Long Island. Floyd had heard that Fanning "Several Years agoe, did Sell all his Landed Estate on Long Island, and Laid the money out in Vessels and Trade which our privateers have been so fortunate as to bring into Some of our ports, so that he is now Reduced in his Circumstances to worse that [sic] Nothing..." Connecticut had already paid Floyd about a hundred dollars, but the disposal of the rest of the property passed into the hands of the commissioners, who were "not Authorized to discharge any Claimes." The General Assembly

explained that the debt to Floyd could not be paid "without greatly Injuring the Sale of the Whole" estate; but the assembly ordered that he be repaid the principal and interest.⁴⁴

In 1780 the British carried the war into the Southern states, withdrawing their troops from the Eastern end of Long Island. Gradually the refugees in Connecticut started homeward. In 1781 William Floyd advised that they land their goods at Fairfield instead of Middletown; he also counseled them to guard their wagons from plunderers. Perhaps the worst ordeal for the refugees was having to face the disastrous results of the war. Men of small means found their properties laid waste. Some began over again in poverty and discouragement; others went elsewhere. Persons of former wealth were obliged to borrow on their land. Properties which had belonged to certain families for over a hundred years passed to new owners.

The state of New York added to the burdens of Long Island. The legislature planned to tax those areas which had not taken an active part against the British; the portion of Long Island was set at £30,000. On March 30, 1784, Floyd urged L'Hommedieu to come quickly for the vote on the tax bill, writing:

The members appear uneasy to get home. The Northward members particularly but I do not think the Legislature will break up untill a fortnight from Saturday next, if the Tax Bill Should goe out unfavourable to this District in your Absence, you might possibly incur Sensure from the people, which might be avoided even if it should goe in the Same way and you be here at the time it Should pass.⁴⁵

Illness prevented L'Hommedieu from attending the legislature. On May 6, 1784 the legislature agreed to tax the Southern District £100,000. Floyd explained: "Some Gentlemen whose Sentiments on that Subject we had heard, and which were in our favour before the Bill was before us, was Directly against us when it was Debated."⁴⁶

(5)

In January, 1779 the New York legislature sent William Floyd back to Congress. It was a rare moment of self revelation when he confided: "You know that I am apt to be pretty sanguine respecting our public affairs . . ." ⁴⁷ But this was said in 1782, when the alarms and excursions of the conflict were rapidly dying. John Jay noted: "Colonel Floyd's conduct while here gained him much respect; he moved on steady, uniform principles, and appeared always to judge for himself, which, in my opinion, is one very essential qualification in a delegate, and absolutely necessary to prevent his being a mere tool." ⁴⁸ Honest, independent and well thought of, Floyd was nearly

always subordinated to those of his colleagues with greater influence in New York, wrote the Chevalier de la Luzerne, minister of France.⁴⁹

Earnest delegates in Philadelphia doubtless sustained themselves by hard work and economies. But in a letter to Floyd, John Morrin Scott of New York inveighed against the "ostentatious Parade" of Congress and the useless number of offices. Floyd's letters told about the chaotic state of national finances, factions in Congress, military affairs, and the development of governmental departments under the Articles of Confederation. In committee he helped pass on memorials, petitions, and complaints. Petitioners apparently asked him to use his influence in their behalf. To one who wished a place in the navy, Floyd wrote.

... I immediately made the application to the Board of Admiralty . . . and as soon as I had obtained their answer, I wrote to you Immediately. . . . it was Impossible for them to provide for you . . . as there was a great number of marine officers now out of Service and waiting for some opening to present itself . . . But the Board cannot provide for half of them . . .⁵⁰

Factions arose inevitably in Congress. Conservative delegates like Silas Deane of Connecticut insisted on the merchant's freedom to see that exports paid for the necessary war supplies; but as the war developed and living costs mounted, many Americans thought the merchants were fattening on their country's misfortunes. Radicals like Arthur Lee of Virginia accused Deane and others with asking Congress to pay for supplies sent by the French government as gifts. Counterattacking, Deane rushed into print; his critics thereupon purchased the services of Thomas Paine. The ensuing war of pamphlets caused "a great talk," noted Floyd, who feared the formation of "violent parties."⁵¹ Floyd apparently sided with the radicals against Deane, but in other matters he seemed to have supported the conservative element. He did not share the radical opposition to the French alliance;⁵² to all appearances he did not accept their dislike of Washington.

Floyd and the radicals hardly saw eye to eye about Vermont. Since New York laid claim to this territory, his delegation protested against its recognition as a state. Floyd noted: "... the consequences of ... [the Vermonters] holding their independence would be a means of producing fifty new States, therefore must by no means be allowed."⁵³ Ethan Allen, one of popular leaders of Vermont, appeared a "Consummate Villain" and quite willing to play the United States against Great Britain for his own advantage. Backed by the

radicals, New England was ready to accept Vermont as an independent state to offset the influence of New York; but, asked William Floyd, what state could compare with Connecticut for frustrating the peace and contentment of New York?

They [Connecticut] have always found means to prevent Congress from Deciding on the Business of Vermont, that they might assist & Strengthen the Vermontiers, untill they [the Vermontiers] have now Got So formidable that I Suppose the Small Majority in Congress who would not wish them to be an Independant State, are Afraid to Determine against them, thus we are to be overRun[sic] by our Neighbours and Congress Stand by and See it Done, without Ever Interfering or Endeavouring to prevent it. is there any Safety for the State of New York or any part of it, under Such a Government. . . .⁵⁴

The men who had to conduct a long war probably stood in sharp contrast to the gayety and dissipation of Philadelphia, where they had long ago worn out their welcome. The city amazed William Floyd with its high prices—"Beef in the market Current at 3 Doll's pr. lb; pork four; wood 100 lb pr. Cord; flour 100 lb pr. Hundred w't, and other things in proportion . . ." It seemed as though "the Devil was with all his Emissaries let loose in this State to ruin our money . . ."⁵⁵ New York, moreover, tended to neglect its delegation. As late as March, 1782, the delegates complained to Governor Clinton: "When it is considered how much inferior the allowance made by our State is to that of all other states, We . . . think our Legislature ought . . . to make every Exertion for a . . . decent Support of their delegates; who, tho' they chearfully submit to the Loss and Inconvenience . . . arising from . . . Absence from home and Neglect of their domestic Concerns, cannot possibly maintain themselves in . . . public Service at their own . . . Expence . . ."⁵⁶

Inflation cut into Floyd's salary each month he was in public service. Floyd had arrived in Philadelphia with \$1000, but by March 4, 1779, 648 of these dollars had been called out of circulation. With a balance of \$352 and the exchange rate set at 11 for 1, Floyd could count £12 16s. as being in his pocket. Although the Continental treasury paid him \$2000 on March 2, this money was only worth £66 13s. 4d. \$2000 on May 13 brought Floyd £50; \$5000 on December 6 was worth £166 13s. 4d. By March 10, 1780 the exchange rate read 50 to 1. Floyd's \$6000 brought him £48. One year later the exchange rate had spiraled to 130 to 1. The Continental Treasury paid Floyd \$15,000 which in his pocketbook flattened to £46 3s.⁵⁷

It has been said that Floyd believed in an equal and productive

system of taxation as the best way to answer public needs. He opposed the repeated issuance of paper money, and proposed reducing the amounts in circulation to restore public credit. To maintain a vigorous business community, he seemed to say, creditor and debtor ought to curb their mutual suspicion. In matters of common defense he advocated giving more power to Congress, which should be strong enough to secure from each state its proportion of aid. Floyd became indignant when he thought that Rhode Island's vote had prevented Congress from securing a five per cent customs duty. He wrote to L'Hommedieu:

"... But is it not intolerable that Little Rhod[e] Island should keep by her willfulness, or Obstinacy, these States from Receiving the Imposts when the whole Country are Clamouring for their Interest on their Certificates . . . [It is] I think . . . a Convincing proof of a Defect in our Government."⁵⁸

Floyd frequently had to remind his state to send him money, but he managed to live in comfort. In April 1779, John Stillé, tailor, sent him a bill for £84 8s. 9d. For £3 Stillé made Floyd a pair of breeches. The tailor did not bother to state the amounts purchased. "Linnen" came to 50s., facings 37s. 6d., thread 5s., silk 20s., hair 22s. 6d., buckram 3s. 9d., and stays 5s. A suit for Nicoll Floyd cost £12. Stillé was more explicit about the materials for Nicoll. "¾ yds of fine Green Durant @ 20 Dollors" cost £24 7s. 6d.; two and one half yards of linen at 60s. added up to £7 10s., while "24 Coat and 24 Vest Buttons" totaled £22 10s.

Floyd lived at the house of Mrs. Mary House which stood on the corner of Fifth and Market Streets. Mrs. Eliza Trist, daughter of Mrs. House, presided over a household which included such Virginians as Joseph Jones, James Henry, John Walker, and James Madison, and John Mathews of South Carolina. Walker brought his wife and daughter from Virginia. About April, 1779, Mrs. Floyd and her three children joined the group. The Floyds probably enjoyed the social mood of Philadelphia. The Marquis de Chastellux apparently wrote Floyd's name phonetically, setting him down as "Flowy," one with whom the Marquis had had an enjoyable conversation at a dinner given by the French minister.

Mrs. Floyd died in 1781, but to Mary and Catherine the years were full of amatory numbers. Major Benjamin Tallmadge was wooing Polly, while James Madison, a thirty-one year old bachelor, fell in love with Kitty. Shyness was Madison's besetting sin; it had blocked his participation in Congressional debates, and kept him from

enjoying the company of beautiful women. Yet James did not have to force himself to play the agreeable rattle, and Kitty was not obliged to stoop to conquer. Thomas Jefferson, Madison's guest in Philadelphia in 1783, did his best to bring the two together. Certainly in the history of star-crossed lovers Jefferson stands unique as a pander, for he brought to this office all that was high-minded. He would admit no impediments, explaining to Madison in cypher:

I wished it to be so as it would give me a neighbor whose worth I rate high, and as I know it will render you happier than you can possibly be in a single state. I often made it the subject of conversation, more exhortation, with her and was able to convince myself that she possessed every sentiment in your favor which you could wish.

Madison replied:

Before you left I had sufficiently ascertained her sentiments. Since your departure the affair has been pursued. Most preliminary arrangements, although definitive, will be postponed until the end of the year in Congress.⁵⁹

Kitty had just turned sixteen, when the Floyds left for New York on April 29, 1783. Madison made the sixty-mile ride with the family to New Brunswick, where he said good-bye to Kitty. They never met again. Catherine gave up her statesman for William Clarkson, a young medical student who in Philadelphia had "hung round her at the harpsichord." She married Clarkson on his graduation in 1785. He practiced medicine in Philadelphia for nine years; then following a serious illness he entered the Presbyterian ministry. The sting of rejection apparently never left Madison. As an old man he did his best to obliterate all possible references to Kitty in his past correspondence.

The Christmas of 1782 found many Americans full of great expectations. A frigate had already arrived in Philadelphia with a copy of the British "Commission . . . to Treat of peace with our Ministers in france." Floyd noted: "the french officers who came in the Frigate Say, that the negotiation was going on, and that it was in general, Expected, that peace would take place in the Course of the winter . . ." But there must be a reconciliation of many interests before a treaty was concluded, thought Floyd, who hoped to guard himself with a reasonable hopefulness.⁶⁰

In the Spring of 1783 William Floyd returned to Mastic. The Tories had carried off what the British soldiers failed to strip. Floyd found desolate fields, uprooted trees, and the charred remains of

fences. The British had made his house uninhabitable by using it as a barracks. Floyd spoke of having to live in a "Confined State" during the summer. The health of his family presumably prevented him from going far from home. In November he said:

In the course of the past Summer and this fall we have all had afever Except (polly) who has Escaped as yet, the people here Call it a Seasoning to the Country; we are now All Recovered and in Good health. Nicoll has had it Return on him Several times when he Exposes himself to alittle hardship.⁶¹

Such were the discomforts that Floyd was unable to answer important letters; such were the demands of daily living that he had no time to consult the proper persons about "the prosecution of Governor Trumbul[l] for the money which is Due on his Old Obligation." Floyd noted: "Their Approbation of Such a Measure is Necessary lest if we Should proceed to it without, and fail in the Suit, they might Refuse to pay their proportionable part of the Expense."⁶² As the years passed, Floyd watched the decline of the interest rate on the old debt. Governor Trumbull died in 1785; but in February, 1789, the Floyds pressed for the remaining £55.

The British still occupied New York City in 1783, but Floyd apparently made purchases there through intermediaries. In December Byvanck and Boynt sent the simplest tools for house construction. Using a broad axe, the builder rough-surfaced the necessary beams, while he carefully smoothed their surfaces with an adze, a razor-sharp blade set at right angles to a short handle. With auger, gimblet, chisel and mallet the builder fashioned the joints. Floyd also ordered nails, but the receipts do not mention a hammer. His neighbors possibly gave him help, and supplied such tools as handsaws, hatchets, brace, and plane.

On December 12 Floyd paid Peter Grant £5 13s. to give David Michelson of New York. Floyd in exchange received three chamber pots, three wash basins, two pitchers, twelve bowls, one waiter, six coffee cups and saucers, and twelve custard cups. Floyd paid one Ellison £9 17s. 11d. for "Sundrys Bot at new york." Fifty-six pounds of sugar came to £2 11s. 4d. Mills and Philetus Phillips of Smithtown kept the Floyds well supplied with drygoods which, according to one statement, were brought out by "Sloop." Mills and Pheletus Phillips also furnished tea, "1 Set of Burnt China," and powder and shot.

Floyd paid Stephen Rapalje £50 for a "Bay mare" (1783). Perhaps the "50 bushels Wheat" costing £20 was used for winter planting.

Ellison brought nine sythes to Mastic. His statement of December 26 came to £32 13s. 9d.; but Floyd received credit of £4 10s. for giving Ellison "1 Share madow and Fating Two Cows." About 1790 Brewster and Satterly sent eight pounds of cloverseed for eight shillings; another time the same firm sent "13 Bushels of Rye @ 3/9" for £2 3s. 9d.

When the British evacuated New York, their place was taken by the Continental Army. On December 4, 1783, Washington said farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern. There is neither receipt nor letter to show that William Floyd was in the city at that time. A "Bill for horses keeping," however, is dated December 20. Floyd paid £9 6s. 8d. for "14 Days hay & Oats at 13/4 per Day." To be sure he traveled frequently between Mastic and New York, but there are only three other statements from stablekeepers among the receipts. The bill from David Titus for £7 17s. on June 30, 1785 shows that Floyd kept his own "Coach." Apparently it was not elaborate but fitted a man of Floyd's station. Items like "Mending thorough-braces...Seting wings...a pair of New Shafts...a New Tail Board...painting...Leather on wings" and "a set of Wareing Leather" suggest that Titus was busy with renovations. He charged for "2 Yds of Cloath" but made no mention of its color. Such other items as "4 Yds of Narrow Lace... 1/2 Yard of Broad... [lace]," and "225 Brass Nails" give indications of elegance.

Early in 1784 Floyd's purchases were determined by practical necessities. The servants must have their overalls, coats, vests, jackets, and "12 Split Shirts with red Capes." For 12s. William Starr made Floyd a "flanl. Vest & 2 Pr. draws." Not until May 8 did Brebner and Brown, woolen and linen drapers at 14 Williams Street, furnish him with "1-3/4 y'ds S. fine Blue Cloth a. 39/" for £3 8s. 3d. On May 10 William Starr's labor for "mackn. Coat & Breeches" came to £1 16s.; but so many were the extras that "Genl. Floid" paid a bill of £2 12s. 8d. For £2 12s. 3d. Walter Frazer made him "a Surtout Coat" setting down such items as shalloon, "1 Velvet Colla," trimming Buttons, and pocket and sleeve linings (1785).

The receipts for drygoods and dressmaking tell much about the women of the Floyd household. Rachel Pinto, the seamstress, charged £4 8s. for altering "a White flounce... turning a Crimson gown and Coat," and making two striped satin gowns and coats (1785). February and March, 1784, must have been exciting months for Polly and Kitty. Rachel Pinto made a pink satin gown and coat. John Turner, Jr., of 79 William Street, sent two dozen of the finest cotton stock-

ings for £10, two yards of white ribbon, one pair of satin shoes, three pairs of "Stuff" shoes, two pairs of white kid gloves, and one pair of colored gloves. Turner also delivered two pairs of paste buckles and two pairs of "stone set Bracelets" to Kitty. In spite of difficulties with English, "Marre's Bill for Barber" indicates that Polly held several sessions with the French hairdresser. The upshot of all this excitement was the marriage of Polly to Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge. In his memoir he wrote: "... on the 18th of March 1784 I led Miss [Mary] Floyd* to the hymenial altar ... when General Floyd gave a most sumptuous entertainment to a great number of invited guests." ⁶³ Not to be outdone by his daughter, William Floyd married Joanna Strong on May 16, 1784. Ann (b. 1786) and Elizabeth (1789-1820) were the children of this second marriage.

Among the notables entertained by William Floyd were Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. In the summer of 1791 the two future presidents took a "botanizing excursion" which led them into New York. Could Madison have swallowed bitter memories, when on June 14, he and Jefferson had breakfast and dinner at the table of William Floyd? Between meals Jefferson visited the Unkechaug Indians at Poosepatuck. A young squaw served as interpreter, while he wrote down about 180 Unkechaug words with their English equivalents. Neither Jefferson nor Madison slept at Floyd's house but probably at the house of William Terry.

Floyd continued to attend the legislature. There is one statement covering lodgings for "11½ Weeks @ 32/ (1787)." The bill came to £24 11s. 9d. Floyd, L'Hommedieu, and two others apparently shared expenses for wood, writing paper, and wine. According to an undated statement, Dorothy Elsworth charged "Col floyd" £6 7s. 11d. for seven to nine days of "Club," board, and tea.

* Mary died on June 3, 1805, leaving five sons and two daughters. Her letters to her husband still have the power to move. One read:

It is Christmas Eve, O My Love will we ever live to spend one together, Good night, my dear, our darling babe is acrying and wants her supper. I continue to have plenty of milk. I thought she would take so much of my time that I should not be as lonesome as in your former absences but I find I miss you more than ever.

One month later Mary wrote:

When nine O'clock comes and the children are gone to bed it is then my best friend is missed. I often look at the bed and dread to undress. And think if I could stop only this night with you or know that you were well I could go to my window-bed contented.

Howard Swigett, *The Forgotten Leaders of the Revolution*.

Garden City, N. Y. 1955. p. 96

Floyd and L'Hommedieu were among the Federalists who supported the Constitution of 1787. Suffolk County was strongly Anti-federal, but it elected Floyd to the House of Representatives. The First Congress of the United States convened at New York City on March 4, 1789. William Floyd took his seat on Monday, April 13. On June 15, 1789, he wrote to L'Hommedieu at Southold:

I have been here now upward of two months, and Congress were formed near a month before I came, and the first business to which their attention was turned, was the passing of Laws for the Laying and Collecting the Impost, and you will be Surprised when I tell you that we have not yet passed a Single Law Relating to that matter nor but one Small Law that Relates to any thing else, nearly three months is Elapsed Since that Business was begun, and if I was Judge from what has passed I should Suppose that it would be near two months more before those Laws will be in Operation so as to Bring any Money into the Treasury.

Altho you have Seen Business of this kind go on very Slow in Public Bodies, Yet I believe you will not be able to conceive how five months could be Spent in passing the Laws for Laying and Collecting the Impost of these States.⁶⁴

Floyd continued to sit in the state senate. In the same letter to L'Hommedieu he wrote:

You have Doubtless before now Seen the Governors proclamation for Calling the Legislature to meet at Albany the 6th of July next. as it will be much the Easiest way for you to go by water I hope I shall have an Opportunity of Seeing you here on your way up.⁶⁵

Floyd was chosen one of the presidential electors in the elections of 1792, 1800, 1804, and 1820. He supposedly voted for Jefferson, of whom he was a great admirer. In 1792 the state of New York paid him £10 for making the 312 mile round trip to Poughkeepsie plus £1 for the day he spent there.⁶⁶ In 1795 Floyd received the nomination for lieutenant governor. His letter of acceptance struck the Cincinnatus theme. Well done, thou good and faithful servant, might the public say! For had not Floyd given "Almost twenty Years Attention to public Business?" He neither entertained "Ambitious Views" nor coveted public office. Truly the time had come to lay down his burdens; but in a Republican government every man must set the country's welfare above personal interest, and answer the call of duty. For this reason Floyd accepted the nomination; but it did him no good, because he lost the election to Stephen Van Rensselaer.⁶⁷

During the undeclared war between the United States and the French Republic William Floyd believed that his people might avoid

disaster, if they were "wise and prudent in their politics." But nothing, he said, could justify the corrupt French Directory for seizing American vessels and demanding what amounted to a bribe of the American commissioners. The lofty principles of the early Revolution were "very laudable," but by 1798 the French seemed to have set them aside for "universal dominion" and making "all the nations of the earth tributary to them."⁶⁸

A political pamphlet which Thomas Jefferson sent in 1800 gave Floyd much pleasure. Publications like this would tend "to enlighten many honest well meaning persons who are . . . Misled by those who have been employed throughout the United States to . . . Deceive." The Republicans, wrote Floyd to Jefferson, should hold a mirror up to politics; then the majority would learn that truth was different from what they had been taught to believe. In spite of the alien and sedition law the people "would be Surprised to think how they had been Imposed on." Perhaps Floyd feared that his letter would be opened and read; for while he did not mention the Federalist Party by name, he clearly identified its members with "The Enemies to the Liberties of this Country"—tireless workers who carried many elections while the Republicans slept. To continue the Federalists in office would clearly end in confusion. Floyd wrote:

. . . we Shall Soon find that we have very little Liberty left and as to property there will not be much of that but what will be wanted in the public Treasury to Satisfy that monstrous load of Debt which our Rule[r]s are bringing upon our Country (and which . . . is all totally unnecessary), unless from experience we should find as Some have Asserted that a National Debt is a National Blessing, if that Should be the Case we Shall be wonderfully Blessed indeed."⁶⁹

William Floyd served as a delegate to the state constitutional convention of 1801. Recently rescued from destruction in a Canadian papermill, a receipt shows that the state paid him \$97.50. He received \$2.50 a day for fifteen days' attendance. The state allowed Floyd twenty days at the same rate to travel to and from his home in Suffolk County. It was assumed that a delegate could cover twenty miles each day. The receipt also carried the signature of Aaron Burr, president of the convention.⁷⁰

Floyd's activities went beyond politics. He presided at the meeting when the trustees took steps to incorporate the Clinton Academy at Easthampton. Its charter, dated November 17, 1784, it was the first institution of the kind incorporated by the Regents of the University of New York. Opening its doors on January 2, 1785, the school planned to offer "a higher grade of learning." The curriculum

included reading, writing, mathematics, bookkeeping, geography, navigation, surveying, and Latin and Greek.

According to a statement signed by Timothy Pickering, the Philadelphia Society For Promoting Agriculture elected William Floyd an honorary member (1785). Floyd ordered "a machine for gathering Clover Seed" for President Washington. In June, 1790, he notified the president of its arrival "at the Store of Mr David Gelston in front Street, Subject to any orders you may please to give concerning it." If the machine was not to leave for Virginia at once, Floyd asked Washington's permission to let "a Jayner . . . have it for this Day and tomorrow as a patern to make one by."⁷¹ As a leader in agricultural reform, L'Hommedieu was greater than Floyd. L'Hommedieu's work on the conservation and uses of barnyard manure was particularly outstanding; he also published much on the use of menhaden fish for fertilizing.

A major-general in the Suffolk County militia, Floyd took command of his brigade "from the time it was first formed." He found them without arms and strangers to discipline; but like a good commander Floyd infused his men with "Ambition and Emmulation." It must have been with pride that he wrote: "... I got them well Equip[p]ed with arms and Accouterments and their Discipline and Appearance on Parade Equal, if not Superior to any Brigade in the State." But on January 2, 1796, Floyd submitted his resignation. His own affairs, he said, called him away from Suffolk County when he should have been with the militia.⁷²

William Floyd took part in the expansion of business enterprise after the Revolutionary War. Possibly it was in New York that Floyd met Thomas Eddy, the wealthy Quaker and philanthropist and prison reformer. The first record of their business dealings appears in a letter to L'Hommedieu dated March 28, 1796.

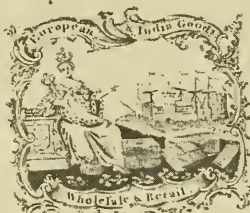
I have Rec^d your Letter by Nicoll, Inclosing the note from Mr. Thomas Eddy Respecting the Requisitions made by the Western Lock Navigation Company the 20th of August last and Another to be paid the first of april.

This is the first knowledge or Intimation that I have Ever had of the Requisitions, therefore it was no fault of mine that it was not paid sooner.

Inclosed is twenty pounds for both Requisitions, which please to pay to Mr. Eddy. I send the money lest you Should not Receive of Smith.

I Should be glad if you Could Return this way home.⁷³

Eddy signed a receipt dated April 1, 1796, stating that Floyd paid



Bought of John Turner
 1734 William and New York

John T

1 p ^r Sattin Shoes	—	£ 1. 4. 0
2 p ^r Stuff	—	12/6 — 1. 11/6
2 p ^r White Kid Gloves	—	3/9 — 1/6
1 p ^r Coat	—	4. 6
2 yds White Ribbon	—	1/10 — 3. 8
1 Doz printed Linen W ^h fe		3. 11/2
		<u>1. 13</u>

Received the above £ 1. 10. 2
 in full for John Turner

J. Henshiff

Bill of John Turner, 1734. Owned by Mrs. John T. Nichols.

£22 16s. for one share of stock. The interest for four months came to seven per cent.

Floyd shared humanitarian interests with Thomas Eddy. In June, 1796, Floyd was one of a commission which visited the Brother Town Indians in Northern New York. When the Indians assembled, he read them a letter from Eddy.

... I then told them that I was come in behalf of the Superintendants to enquire into their Circumstances Generally, and their present Necessities in particular and that I would Endeavour so far as might Appear Reasonable and proper to Relieve them, I told them of what we had Concluded to Send them from New York, and also that we had it in Contemplation to Build them a house for their Convenience of public Worship, a School, Town house, and Courthouse.⁷⁴

The Indians, however, had need of "4 pair of Oxen, 12 Cows, 120 Bushels of Corn, 3 Barrels of pork, 6 ploughs, 6 Chains, 3 Setts of Harrow teeth, 3 Setts of Cart Iron—and 100 Sheep." "Fully Satisfied that the money could not be laid out to greater advantage," Floyd and the rest of the commission made four drafts on Thomas Eddy for \$875. At Whitestown six persons from the Society of Friends received Floyd. They had been appointed "to goe among the Indians." Floyd noted: "... they appear to me to be Steady Judicious men, and none but Such could have Reason to Expect to Succeed in So Arduous an undertaking."⁷⁵

On February 20, 1801, William Floyd wrote that "under the protecting hand of a kind providence" his family was enjoying the "Blessing" of good health. Only Nicoll's small daughter was suffering from "fever and ague." "Sister Woodhull is at present in a State of pretty good health for her," said William Floyd, but the rest of his neighbors were well. Nicoll was in Albany attending the legislature and would not return home until April. Betsy was in New York attending "the Dancing, and another School." Not until Spring did she expect to return home. Floyd hoped to be well enough in May to go to Northern New York. He would travel by way of New York City but not in his own carriage; he planned to sail up to Albany and then take the stage.⁷⁶

At this point we leave William Floyd, Long Islander. Colonial gentleman, revolutionary, and public figure of the early republic, he stands cane in hand beneath a large shade tree surveying the acres of Mastic. He left Long Island for Western, New York, where he had been spending his summers for many years past. From 1803 to 1821 he lived in this newly opened area; but that is the story of William Floyd of Western, and is not within the frame of the portrait.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 The Floyd family originally came from Brenockshire, Wales, landing in Massachusetts about 1650 before moving on to Setauket, Long Island. Nicoll Floyd (1705-1755), grandson of Richard the first settler, married Tabitha Smith and settled at Mastic. William Floyd was born here on December 17, 1734.
- 2 In the possession of Dr. Joseph E. Fields.
- 3 In the possession of Dr. Joseph E. Fields. In 1781 Floyd wrote to Ezra L'Hommedieu: "I will be Obliged . . . if you would bring for me one of those Books printed . . . [in] Philadelphia that Contains all the Constitutions of the Several States." Floyd letters in possession of Andrew Fiske, (hereafter cited as Fiske Papers), W. Floyd to Ezra L'Hommedieu, Aug. 16, 1781, Middletown, Conn.
- 4 East Hampton Free Library, East Hampton, New York, Document Book 1, p. 19, William Floyd to William Dering, December 25, 1782, Phila., Pa.
- 5 "Receipts for moneys paid toward the Church at Brookhaven" is apparently the only statement in the Floyd papers signed by Richard Floyd the Tory.
- 6 Brookhaven Town Records, Book C.
- 7 Suffolk County Historical Society, Town tax list.
- 8 Osborn Shaw, "The Floyd Home at Mastic," *Addresses Delivered on the Occasion of a Visit to the General William Floyd House at Mastic, Long Island By Members and Friends of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities* . . . August 5, 1949 (page number not given). Mrs. John Treadwell Nichols has written: "There is a story that the large tract of land lying from Smithtown on the northwest to Forge River on the southeast was won from the Smiths at a game of cards, but fortunately this is disproved by a deed of 1718 which states that 'for good and money in hand payed' it became the property of Richard Floyd, his heirs and assigns forever." Mrs. J. T. Nichols, "Old Mastic House," *ibid.*
- 9 Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Sprague Collection, vol. 2, p. 3, W. Floyd to [n. s.], Feb. 20, 1801, Mastic, N. Y.
- 10 Fiske Papers, W. Floyd to E. L'Hommedieu, April 10, 1764, Mastic.
- 11 Floyd papers in possession of Mrs. J. T. Nichols (Hereafter cited as Floyd Mss.), Peter Lyons to W. Floyd, July 21, 1776, Hanover, Va.
- 12 New York Public Library, Fragment of the Proceedings of the old Committee of Safety of the Town of Brookhaven, (Mss.) 8 pages (hereafter cited as Fragment).
- 13 Yale University Library, undated mss.
- 14 F. G. Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut*, p. 1007.
- 15 New York Public Library, Fragment.
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New York the 28 february 1784.

Wills flint To Mary

the 18. To a crossins	0 8. 0
To a comb crossins - - - - -	0 16. 0
To pound of powder - - - - -	0 2. 0
To a pot of pomelons - - - - -	0 4. 0
To Black pin - - - - -	0 2. 0
To Draining - - - - -	0 8. 0
To Draining - - - - -	0 2. 0
the 26. To a pound of powder - - - - -	0 8. 0
To Draining - - - - -	2 16. 0
March the 6. To a crossins an pinching - - - - -	0 16. 0
To pound of powder ¹⁰⁰ Black pin - - - - -	0 4. 6
To pot of pomelons an heird pomelons - - - - -	0 5. 6
	3 14. 0

Bill, presumably from a French Hairdresser, 1784.

Paris 16 1784. C^{te} ff^{te} M^{re} H^{te} 2^{te} E^{te} Elias Pelletreau.

To P^{re} Silver Cans - - - - - £20 14. 6

if you may pay the Money in to Sister White as
we mentioned ~~the~~ Except you should have a more
direct opportunity Your Obedt. Friend E Pelletreau

Rec^d the Counterparts - P. Elias Pelletreau

Bill from Elias Pelletreau, the famous Long Island silversmith,
1784. Both bills owned by Mrs. Nichols.



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